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786F.11/10-2660
29 OCT 1960

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AmEmbassy, LONDON

800
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

October 26, 1960
DATE

REF :

29 OCT 1960

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	NEA-4	RM/R-2 / NR-2 ~~D-4~~ P-3 M/OR, M/O-1
	REC'D 10-31	INFO OTHER CIA-10 USIA-10 Army-4 NAVY-3 NSA-2 AIR-6 INT-7 OSD-4 Com-17

SUBJECT: Foreign Office Comments on Abdication of the Ruler of Qatar and Succession of His Son

The reporting officer on October 25 discussed with Mr. W. F. Marshall, the desk officer on Qatar and Bahrain in the Foreign Office Arabian Department, the news published that day in London concerning the abdication of Shaikh Ali bin Abdullah al Thani, the Ruler of Qatar. Marshall said that the ceremony at Doha at which the abdication was announced had gone smoothly, and he showed the reporting officer a telegram from Doha reporting the event. Shaikh Ali's abdication, the succession of his son Shaikh Ahmad, and Shaikh Khalifah bin Hamad's designation as Heir Apparent had all been announced in a formal manner and in the presence of the Qatar Political Agent, John Moberly, and the Acting Political Resident, Mr. Morgan Mann. The new Ruler then reviewed an honor guard from the British frigate, HMS Loch Ruthven.

Marshall commented that there would be two interesting things to watch now. 1) How Shaikh Ahmad conducted himself as Ruler. He had seemed fairly able, for example, in his handling of a strike which occurred about a month ago in Qatar. However, it was a different situation to be actual Ruler instead of acting Ruler having behind him the authority of his father. 2) How the new Ruler and Shaikh Khalifah would come to a working arrangement.

Marshall thought that the former ruler, Shaikh Ali, who is about 68 years old, would probably withdraw from the scene and spend most of his time in Geneva. One news report had said that he might go to live in Lebanon, and this was a possibility. Marshall said that Shaikh Khalifah is 28 years old. He did not know how old the new Ruler is, but in view of Shaikh Ali's advanced years and the fact that Ahmad is his second son presumably he is considerably older than Khalifah. The reporting officer reviewed the substance of Dhahran's telegram 250 to the Department, and Marshall commented that he thought this account of events by Abdullah Darwish sounded likely but the Foreign Office had not heard any other description of the "inner workings" of the family decision and, therefore, he could not really say whether it was completely accurate or not. Marshall seemed particularly interested in the report that Khalifah had been required by the family to give an understanding not to attempt to disturb the regime. If so, he thought this should bode well for peace in Qatar, but it was hard to see how Khalifah could actually be thus "bound over to keep the peace".

786F.11/10-2660

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Marshall remarked wryly that one unfortunate by-product of the abdication was that a design for a new issue of Qatar postage stamps would now have to be completely reconsidered. The Foreign Office had gone to a great deal of trouble in assisting with the selection of an appropriate design, which included a portrait of Shaikh Ali, and all of this work would now have to be reconsidered and the design redone.

Comment: The abdication of the Ruler of Qatar has received brief and almost perfunctory attention in the London papers. The longest and most informative items were an article on October 25 and an editorial on October 26 in The Times. Copies are enclosed. Marshall appeared to feel that there would be no worsening and possibly some improvement in the situation in Qatar as the result of this change of Rulers.

For the Ambassador:

Grant V. McClanahan
Grant V. McClanahan
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures
1. Oct 25 Times clipping entitled "Ruler of Qatar Abdicates" (5 copies)
2. Oct 26 Times editorial "Succession in Qatar" (5 copies)

cc: AmEmbassy, BEIRUT (1 copy each enclosure)
AmConGen, DHAHRAN (1 copy each enclosure)
AmEmbassy, JIDDA (1 copy each enclosure)
AmConsul, KUWAIT (1 copy each enclosure)

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By RH NARA Date 11-07-04

PAPER: THE TIMES

CITY: LONDON

Enclosure No. 2
Despatch No. 800
From London (5 copies)
DATE. 1961

Succession in Qatar

The Arab states have just put Oman on the agenda of the General Assembly. According to the picture painted in their memorandum Oman is the scene of aggression which amounts to a breach of the Charter and of international law. This picture is pure fiction; as SIR PATRICK DEAN pointed out, this committee is being asked to consider "a mythical aggression against a non-existent state". Oman has been quiet for the past year, although possibly revolt against the SULTAN'S authority could start up again if it was strongly supported from outside. Because Oman is about the most remote and least known part of the Arab world it is easy for propagandists to treat it in the black and white simplification of colonialism. There is, however, no way in which misinformed international debate could help the country. The SECRETARY-GENERAL'S emissary, MR. DE RIBBING, may well have a useful part to play over Buraimi, which is one of the problems in which the SULTAN of MUSCAT and OMAN is involved, but this is a separate matter requiring separate treatment.

Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf is easy to criticize. It is hard to show how the people there would be better off without it. One of the British protected states in the Gulf, Qatar, has just come smoothly through a transfer of power from one ruler to another, and this is the sort of operation which can cause ill feeling, or worse, if wise counsels are not available. When Amurath to Amurath succeeds—or, in this case, AL-THANI to AL-THANI—there is usually more than one candidate and primogeniture does not apply in tribal societies. The best man for the job has to be settled by consent, whether the inheritance is to be a handful of nomads or an empire of oil. SHAIKH ALI BIN ABDULLAH AL-THANI, ruler of Qatar since 1949, had for some time wished to abdicate. His son, SHAIKH AHMAD, and the son of the former ruler, SHAIKH KHALIFAH BIN HAMAD, were candidates for the succession. A solution to their claims has been found in making SHAIKH AHMAD ruler, with an understanding that after him authority will pass to SHAIKH KHALIFAH and his family.

Such an arrangement recalls the settlement between STEPHEN and HENRY I, and in many ways life in Arabia is still ordered by conventions familiar to medieval Europe. The difficulty is to adjust life peacefully to modern conditions, particularly when, as in the case of Qatar, oil has brought sudden wealth. In no part of the Arab world is the contrast between old and new more violent than in this barren promontory, jutting north in the middle of the Gulf. For centuries it was a symbol of desolation. Nothing grows in Qatar's flat wastes, and its 20,000 inhabitants found a precarious living from pearls and fish. Now the export of some eight million tons of oil a year brings in a revenue of some £18m. There has, no doubt, been much money squandered, but schools and a magnificent hospital have been built as well. Qatar's problem, now that the tricky succession question is out of the way, must be to put its finances on an orderly basis to meet the day, sometimes estimated at twenty years hence, when oil reserves are exhausted.

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PAPER: THE TIMES

CITY: LONDON

DATE: OCT. 25 1960

RULER OF QATAR ABDICATES

SON IN CONTROL OF RICH OIL AREA

BAHRAIN, Oct. 24

The Ruler of Qatar, Shaikh Ali bin Abdullah al Thani, abdicated today in favour of his son Shaikh Ahmad, a British Government spokesman here announced tonight.

The spokesman said that the ceremony of handing over took place at the

Shaikh Ali bin Abdullah al Thani.

Rayyan palace, at Doha, in the presence of the British political agent and the acting political resident.

"The succession was agreed by the ruling family in the traditional manner", the spokesman said. After the ceremony the new ruler inspected a guard of honour.

It was also announced that Shaikh Ali's nephew, Shaikh Khalifah bin Hamad, becomes heir apparent.—*Reuter.*

WEALTH FROM ROYALTIES

Shaikh Ali bin Abdullah al Thani has been ruler of Qatar since 1949. His interests have always been religious rather than political—the ruling house of Qatar, like that of Saudi Arabia, follows the strict doctrine of Wahhabism—and his choice as ruler was in some ways unexpected. He has, moreover, been in poor health for some time, so that his abdication is not unexpected.

In fact, Shaikh Ali's abdication had probably only been delayed through difficulty on agreeing over a successor. His son, Shaikh Ahmad, had obvious claims, but so had Shaikh Khalifah, son of the previous ruler. These differences have apparently been settled by making Shaikh Khalifah the new heir apparent, so far as such a position is recognized in Arab society.

During the past 11 years Shaikh Ali has seen Qatar grow from one of the poorest and most desolate regions of Arabia to a country exporting 8 million tons of oil a year, with the attendant wealth from royalties. Oil is produced by the Qatar Petroleum Company, an associate of the Iraq Petroleum Company.

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Authority NND 949527
By RH NARA Date 11-07-04

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Amcongen DHAHRAN

116
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

November 1, 1960 NOV
DATE

REF : Contel 250 to Dept, rptd info London 21, Jidda 190, COMIDEASTFOR 201015Z;
Contel 259 to Dept, rptd info London 23, Jidda 195, COMIDEASTFOR 260915Z.

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	NEA-4	RM/R-2 EWR-5 INR-7 P-3 S/S-CR-1 London-1 Kuwait-1
	REC'D 11-8	OTHER USIA-10 CIA-10 OSD-4 ARMY-4 NAVY-4 AIR-6 NSA-2

SUBJECT: Accession of Ahmad bin Ali Al-Thani as Ruler of Qatar.

(4)

Upon receiving confirmation of the abdication of Shaikh Ali bin Abdullah al-THANI and the accession of his son, Shaikh Ahmad bin Ali Al-THANI as Ruler of Qatar on October 24, the Consulate General despatched a telegram of congratulations and good wishes as is the custom in this area (Enclosure 1). A reply was received from Shaikh Ahmad thanking the Consulate General for its message (Enclosure 2).

On October 25 the Consulate General was in a position to confirm the abdication of Shaikh Ali and to give some information on the general situation (Contel 250 to Dept) because the Consulate General's Consular Officer had been in Qatar on Consular business on the morning of October 24.

On October 29, the Consulate General's Economic Officer, Vice Consul Samuel C. KEITER, visited Qatar to convey the Consulate General's congratulations personally and to learn more of the background of Shaikh Ali's abdication. Arrangements were accordingly made through the British Political Residency, Bahrain.

Mr. Keiter was received informally by Shaikh Ahmad and no matters of substance were discussed during the brief meeting. Mr. Keiter was able, however, to learn from the British Political Agent in Doha and the Acting Political Resident in Bahrain further details on the situation; this information is in a separate despatch.

The Department may be interested in accounts of Shaikh Ali's abdication given by various sources within and without the Middle East. The Radio London and Mecca report is straight forward but adding the element of finality and stability to the facts. (Enclosure 4). The Gulf Daily Times, a British-sponsored Bahrain publication, also plays down political unrest in Qatar by suggesting the abdication was caused by the Ruler's ill health (Enclosure 3).

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Page 1 of
Encl. No. 1
Desp. No. 116
From Amcongen DHAHRAN

November 24, 1960

Copy of telegram sent to Shaikh Ahmad.

HH Shaikh Ahmad bin Ali al-Thani,

Doha,

Qatar.

The Consulate General of the United States of America at Dhahran offers its sincere congratulations and best wishes to Your Highness on the occasion of your accession as Ruler of Qatar. May the people of Qatar continue to enjoy progress and prosperity during your reign.

S/ Walter M. McClelland
American Consul

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By RH NARA Date 11-07-04

On the other hand Cario Radio, according to a British digest of Middle East radio broadcasts, portrayed Shaikh Ali's abdication as the result of Arab Nationalist agitation in Qatar and as marking the end of British imperialism there.

Walter M. McClelland
American Consul

Enclosure:

1. Telegram to Shaikh Ahmad
2. Shaikh Ahmad's reply to telegram.
3. Article from Gulf Daily Times dated October 24, 1960.
4. Digest of Middle East Radio Broadcast, October 25, 1960, compiled by Arabian American Oil Company.

Cc: Amembassy JIDDA

Dept please pass copies to:

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By RH NARA Date 11-07-04

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Page 1 of
Encl. No. 2
Desp. No. 116
From Amcongen DHAHRAN

Copy of telegram received from Shaikh Ahmad.

November 28, 1960

I wish to express my gratefulness for your kind and poignant congratulations. May the years prove fruitful for both of our peoples to enjoy.

S/ Ahmad Al-Thani

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By RH NARA Date 11-07-04

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Page 1 of
Encl. No. 3
Desp. No. 116
From Amcongen DHAHRAN

Article from Gulf Daily Times dated October 24, 1960.

New Ruler for Qatar

Doha, Monday.

His Highness Shaikh Ali Bin Abdullah Althani, Ruler of Qatar today abdicated in favour of his son, H. E. Shaikh Ahmad Bin Ali Althani.

H. E. Shaikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Althani, his paternal cousin, has been nominated as the heir apparent.

Today and tomorrow are declared as official holidays to mark the occasion. The whole of Qatar is in a festive mood. All the shops are closed and decorated with flags and festoons.

The new ruler is 40 years old and has had his education in Qatar schools and from private tutors.

It is believed that the abdication by the former ruler is because of his ill-health.

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Page 1 of
Encl. No. 4
Desp. No. 116
From Amcongen

Digest of Middle East Radio Broadcast, October 25, 1960, compiled by Arabian American Oil Company.

RULER OF QATAR ABDICATES IN FAVOR OF HIS SON.

Radios London and Mecca, 24 Oct: -- Ruler of Qatar Shaikh 'Ali ibn'Abd Allah Al Thani abdicated in favor of his son Ahmad ibn 'Ali. A cousin of the new Ruler, Shaikh Khalifah ibn Hamad Al Thani, was declared Crown Prince. A two-day holiday was declared throughout Qatar on Monday and Tuesday to celebrate the occasion. The BBC correspondent in Qatar says that this new arrangement puts an end to widespread suspicions that Shaikh Ahmad and Shaikh Khalifah were competing for the position of Ruler. Shaikh 'Ali wanted to abdicate long ago, but has waited until agreement was reached about who would succeed him.

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Amcongen DHAHRAN

117
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

November 1, 1960
DATE

NOV 2 1960

REF : 786F.001/NEA
Contel 259 Rptd Info London 23, Jidda 195, COMIDEASTFOR 260915Z

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	NEA-4	RM/R-2 EUR-5 INR-7 P-3 S/S-CR-1 London-1 Kuwait
	REC'D 11-8	OTHER USIA-10 CIA-10 OSD-4 ARMY-4 NAVY-4 AIR-6 NSA-2

SUBJECT: British View of Accession of Shaikh Ahmad as Ruler of Qatar.

(3)

SUMMARY

According to the British representatives in the area, the abdication of Shaikh ALI; the accession of his son, AHMAD, as Ruler, and the designation of Shaikh KHALIFAH as Crown Prince are the result of a decision of the Ruling Family, formally set down and signed by over one hundred members of the family. The British feel that the political situation in Qatar is now more stable than before but that it is still questionable whether any real improvement in controlling expenditures of the Ruling Family will be forthcoming. Members of Khalifah's branch of the Ruling Family, the Bani Hamad, have associated themselves with the decision; it remains to be seen, however, how the new arrangement will operate in practice.

786F.11/11-160

A few days after the abdication of Shaikh Ali bin Abdullah Al-THANI as Ruler of Qatar, an officer of the Consulate General had an opportunity to discuss the course of events first with Mr. Morgan MAN, Acting British Political Resident in Bahrain, and then with the British Political Agent, Mr. John MOBERLY, in Qatar. The following paragraphs summarize what they had to say. Unless otherwise indicated the information was acquired, in the first instance, from Mr. Man.

Shaikh Ali was reluctant to exercise power and did so only spasmodically. His activity was further limited by diabetes and bad teeth. Shaikh Khalifah bin Hamad al-Thani felt that he should be the successor; in fact a letter had been written, signed by Shaikh Ali and Shaikh Abdullah, Ali's father and Khalifah's grandfather, promising that Khalifah, and not a son of Ali, would succeed Ali. Mr. Man emphasized that the letter does exist but stated that it has been "overtaken by events". Shaikh Ali wanted his son, Shaikh Ahmad, to succeed him, and was supported by most of the Ruling Family, but he hesitated to declare Ahmad Heir Apparent.

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The uncertainty of the situation encouraged supporters of each claimant to act in the hope of resolving the situation. Two members of the Beni Hamad (Hamad was Khalifah's father) became particularly "obnoxious". Nasir bin Muhammad shot at Shaikh Ali's automobile on May 29, 1960, in Aley to scare Ali into giving him, Nasir, more money, according to Mr. Man. (Congen Despatch 20, July 20, 1960). In September Nasir and his half-brother Suhaim, claimed the land on which the new powerhouse is to be built, despite the fact that the land already had been deeded to the government by the Beni Hamad. Khalifah recognized that the land was now the government's and Ahmad threatened to "call out the forces." Nasir and Suhaim gave way but the overall situation was worse than ever.

Upon Shaikh Ali's return to Qatar in mid-September, the family fell to discussing the situation. The solution arrived at was a surprise to the British, although they had long urged Ali to settle the question of the succession and were quite satisfied with his abdication.

Khalifah hesitated to accept the formula suggested. His claim to the succession would again rest on a letter. Finally he agreed. Mr. Moberly stated that there was never any question of trying to prevent Ahmad's succession but that Khalifah wondered if he might best strenghten his position by not being identified with the regime. Khalifah's long talk with the Resident on October 24 was primarily concerning his bitterness that the original letter was being ignored and his fear that the same thing would happen to this one.

This time the letter was signed by about one hundred members of the Ruling Family, including the leaders of the Beni Hamad. Since it is an act of the entire family, which is the traditional seat of authority, it should be very difficult to ignore or put aside when Ahmad leaves the rulership. The letter begins by expressing regret that Shaikh Ali has found it necessary to abdicate, then states that it is the will of the family that Ahmad should succeed him but that Khalifah should be Deputy Ruler and Heir Apparent and that, if for any reason Khalifah could not succeed upon Ahmad's death or abdication, the successor should be from among the Beni Hamad. The document was witnessed by the Acting British Political Resident.

It remains to be seen whether anything will be done to improve the financial situation and limit unproductive expenditures of the Ruling Family. Khalifah is to be Minister of Finance; the Acting Political Resident said Ahmad would retain final authority over finances while the Political Agent said the exact relationship was not yet determined. Khalifah has long insisted that he would curb the spending of the family if he had the power and Ahmad has also given lip service to that goal.

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The British feel that the present situation is much better than the previous one. The succession is settled and both Ahmad and Khalifah are involved in the government. Ahmad now has the authority which he lacked as Acting Ruler. The Beni Hamad agreed to the arrangement and should find it hard to disavow although their extremists could conceivably force the issue.

The Consulate General feels it is still too early to assess the situation reliably. Surface indications tend to support the British view but Khalifah may not really be willing to wait twenty years and factional strife could easily recur if the government met real difficulty or if Khalifah felt he was being ignored. Although Ahmad seems to be wealthy now, the Consulate General has heard rumors that he will step down after filling his pockets.

Walter M. McClelland
American Consul

Department please pass:

Amembassy LONDON
Amconsulate KUWAIT

Cc: Amembassy JIDDA

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PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES

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FROM: AmEmbassy LONDON

Date Sent: November 8, 1960
Rec'd: November 10, 1960
2:40 p.m.

TO: Secretary of State

NO: G-539

RPTD INFO: AmEmbassy BEIRUT G-29, AmConGen G-23, AmEmbassy JIDDA G-28, AmConsul KUWAIT G-17.

REF: Emb. Despatch 800.

Embassy November 3 asked Foreign Office (Beaumont, Head of Arabian Department) concerning British views on recent abdication of Sheikh Ali, Ruler of Qatar, succession of his son, Sheikh Ahmed, and designation of nephew, Sheikh Khalifah, as heir apparent.

Foreign Office thinks this development was "good thing" and hopes that change will have ameliorative effect on administrative arrangements of Government of Qatar and on relations between Qatar Government and Qatar Petroleum Company.

British also hope it will clear the way for appointment of new Advisor to Government of Qatar. Expectation is that written terms of service of new Advisor would contain definition of what portion of total Government revenues are to be devoted to public expenditure, and also define Advisor's relationship to that portion. Terms of service would indicate which questions he would have discretion to handle himself and which ones he would need refer to Ruler or others.

Sheikh Ali had never separated public expenditures from those of Ruling Family. Under Sheikh Ahmed probably Qatar revenue will be divided somewhat as follows: 50% for ruler himself, 30% of remaining 70% for rest of ruling family, and remainder for public budget. Foreign Office understands that Khalifah will be head of Qatar Government Finances. However, on certain important financial questions, he will be required to consult a council of members of the Ruling Family and at least placate them.

Asked what had been outcome of the question of a specific UK pledge that Khalifah should be heir apparent, Beaumont said HMG's position was that if Qatar Ruling Family designated Khalifah as heir apparent, HMG would have no objection. Ruling Family has now so designated him, and British accept this fact.

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POL/N: GVMclanahan:rms
11-4-60
Clearance: POL/N-Mr. Newsom, E/GEN-Mr. McGinnis

C. V. McClanahan

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